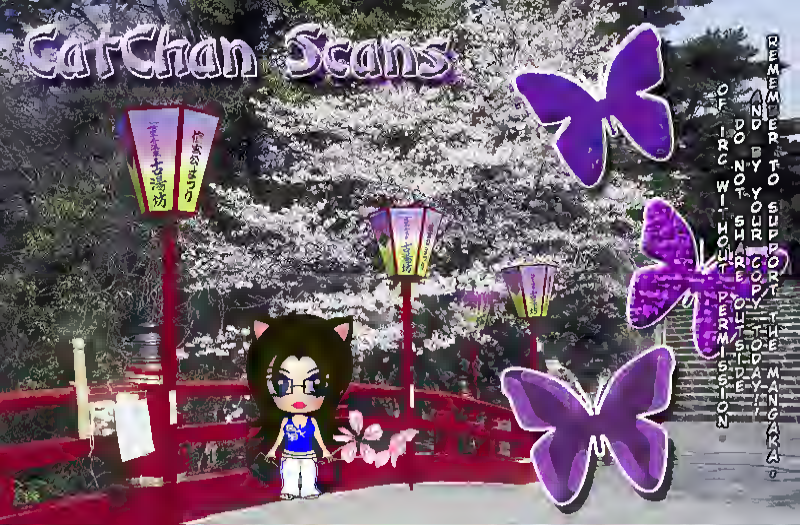
CatChan Scans
REMEMBER TO SUPPORT THE MANGAKA
AND BUY YOUR COPY OF THE GOD DAMN
DO NOT SHARE OUTSIDE OF IRC WITHOUT PERMISSION

crossroad

Story & Art by

SHIOKO MIZUKI

4

crossroad

4

ALRIGHT, LET'S ASK OUR FAVORITE TEACHERS WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST IN VOLUME 4!
I'LL BE YOUR HOST, THE BABE FROM THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE ..WITH EMOTIONAL WINDS OF CHANGE REACHING SPEEDS UP TO 40 MPH ..
AND HERE IT IS, FOLKS! VOLUME 4 OF CROSSROAD!!
I LIKE MY NO 1 GIRL AT HER SEXIEST! ♡
WHAT I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOST IS THE APPEARANCE OF A "HOT AND STEAMY KAJITSU TODA."
HUGE HUGE
..THE ONE AND ONLY KAJITSU TODA CAGE 16!
Crossroad Information
Cross
21 43
Oh, sorry, it's not what you think!
KAJITSU, WHY YOU LITTLE...
SINCE WHEN DID THIS TURN INTO ONE OF THOSE MANGA?
HONK BEEP
OR HOW ABOUT A "TALK DIRTY TO ME KAJITSU TODA"?
AN "S&M-STYLE KAJITSU TODA "?
I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE INTERVIEWED THEM!
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
LIES! ALL LIES!
WHAT? WHAT? WHAAAT?

To be continued

crossroad

story and art by
SHIOKO MIZUKI

volume 4

go!comi

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crossroad

The Story So Far...

Kajitsu, Taro, Natsu and Satsuki are four siblings not tied by blood living together with their mother-in-law, Rumiko, under one roof. Kajitsu, who has loved her little brother, Natsu, since they were kids, goes out on a date with her teacher, Akai-sensei, and falls head over heels for him. However, Natsu gets jealous which only increases his feelings for Kajitsu. But now that the substitute teacher Akai-sensei is staying at the school full-time, will his relationship with Kajitsu continue...?

Cast of Characters

Nitta Mano
Kajitsu's classmate and best friend. She has a crush on Tokihito and vice-versa.

Akai-sensei
The substitute teacher for Kajitsu's calligraphy class. He doesn't exactly play by the rules since he smokes on school grounds and flirts mercilessly with his student Kajitsu.

Tokihito Imanakajima
The son of a once distinguished family, now in ruins. He has a secret crush on Kajitsu.

Natsu
Kajitsu's younger brother also 16. The highest-ranking student at school, he gets a lot of unwanted attention from teachers and other students.

Kajitsu Tada
A 16-year old girl who constantly struggles to improve her pessimistic outlook on life.

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Concerning Honorifics

At Go! Comi, we do our best to ensure that our translations read seamlessly in English while respecting the original Japanese language and culture. To this end, the original honorifics (the suffixes found at the end of characters' names) remain intact. In Japan, where politeness and formality are more integrated into every aspect of the language, honorifics give a better understanding of character relationships. They can be used to indicate both respect and affection. Whether a person addresses someone by first name or last name also indicates how close their relationship is.

Here are some of the honorifics you might encounter in reading this book:

-san: This is the most common and neutral of honorifics. The polite way to address someone you're not on close terms with is to use "-san." It's kind of like Mr. or Ms., except you can use "-san" with first names as easily as family names.

-chan: Used for friendly familiarity, mostly applied towards young girls. "-chan" also carries a connotation of cuteness with it, so it is frequently used with nicknames towards both boys and girls (such as "Na-chan" for "Natsu").

-kun: Like "-chan," it's an informal suffix for friends and classmates, only "-kun" is usually associated with boys. It can also be used in a professional environment by someone addressing a subordinate.

-sama: Indicates a great deal of respect or admiration.

Sempai: In school, "sempai" is used to refer to an upperclassman or club leader. It can also be used in the workplace by a new employee to address a mentor or staff member with seniority.

Sensei: Teachers, doctors, writers or any master of a trade are referred to as "sensei." When addressing a manga creator, the polite thing to do is attach "-sensei" to the manga-ka's name (as in Mizuki-sensei).

Onii: This is the more casual term for an older brother. Usually you'll see it with an honorific attached, such as "onii-chan."

Onee: The casual term for older sister; it's used like "onii" with honorifics.

[blank]: Not using an honorific when addressing someone indicates that the speaker has permission to speak intimately with the other person. This relationship is usually reserved for close friends and family.

#17 D.o.o.

..GET HIM TO HELP YOU OUT AT HOME
YEAH, I BET YOU COULD..
KAJITSU-SAN, WHY DON'T YOU ASK NATSU-KUN INSTEAD?
Lunch break at McDonald's
SIGHoo..
I THINK I SHOULD GIVE HIM A BREAK.
←Tired smile

I'd like to introduce the two new characters who will be entering the story: Erica and Hayami. With my privilege as the creator, I decided to put them on the cover (ha ha!) The name "Erica" was taken from the daughter of a German friend of mine. (Sorry, Erica, for taking it without permission!) The real Erica isn't the little witch this one is, though. She's an adorable high school girl. As for Hayami, I made her keeping in mind that I wanted a water-like character to counter-balance the fiery attitude of Erica. Because of her feminine appeal but tomboyish personality, she'd probably belong in the same group as me (ha ha). I'd love to draw a story of romance blossoming between them someday.

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND...
HMMM...
...WHAT'S SO HARD ABOUT IT.
US TWO ARE ON DIFFERENT PLANETS TO START WITH! WE DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S QUESTIONS!
AARGH! I CAN'T STAND HAVING TO LOOK ALL DUMB AND CONFUSED WHEN THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND! I SWEAR, I'LL NEVER ASK HIM FOR HELP AGAIN!
ALL THOSE SCENES IN SHOJO MANGA ARE LIES!
ACTUALLY, I ONCE ASKED NATSU FOR HELP TOO.
BUT HE WAS EXPLAINING SO FAST, I COULDN'T KEEP UP!
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
Huh..?
See, first you do this, and then that, and then you're done.
The Lecturer
The Student
You Moron!
Yes, Sir!
WAAAAAAH!

HE'S TOO SMART FOR ME TO ASK FOR HELP.
OH, IT'S NOT THAT.
THIS SHOULD BE A BREEZE FOR HIM!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I HEARD HE WAS A WHOLE YEAR AHEAD AT HIS LAST SCHOOL.
LOOK AT IT!
RANT
RANT
RANT
I CAN'T GET THIS! NATSU, HELP ME!
WHAAAT !?
IF IT'S TOO HARD FOR NATSU...
THEN I DON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF GETTING IT! TOO BAD!
...THAT I CAN'T FIGURE THIS OUT
HMM... IT'S WEIRD..
HUH?
...THAT YOU CAN'T GET?
Hmmmmm...
JUST WHAT IS IT..

.. WITH NOTHING TO DO BY MYSELF.
BOOOORING.
WELL, I'VE GOT THE WHOLE AFTER-NOON ..
SIGH
BOY, DID I FEEL LIKE A FIFTH WHEEL!
WHAT WERE THE THINGS I USED TO DO ON MY OWN?
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS.
IT WAS EASIER BEING ALONE.
BUT NOW THAT I HAVE EVERYONE...

STARE
YOU SAID IT.
GUESS ALL WE CAN DO ..
...IS DO THE BEST WE CAN
LIKE A PARADISE IN THE TROPICS!
SO STEAMY..
LOVE!
LOVE!
OH, MY!!
LOVE
LOVE
YOU'RE LEAVING?
YUP!
TAKE YOUR TIME, YOU TWO!
Thanks SO MUCH!
WHRRR
UH, ANYWAY... I JUST REMEMBERED I HAVE SOME STUFF TO DO AT HOME
I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE MUCH MORE OF THIS!

.....
BAM
STAMMER
STAMMER
STAMMER
WH-WH-WHA...
WHAT IS THAT ALL ABOUT!?
HMMMM!?
STAMMER

WE'RE ALL ALONE IN THIS WORLD..
...AND THE SOONER YOU LEARN THAT, THE BETTER!
ONII-CHAN...
...I'VE FORGOTTEN HOW...
...TO PASS THE TIME BY MYSELF.
IF ONII-CHAN HADN'T COME TO LIVE WITH US...
...I WONDER WHAT SORT OF LIFE WE'D ALL HAVE NOW.
ANY-WAY...
...GUESS I'LL GO HOME AND STUDY.
MY
MY
MY

KAJITSU?
H-HEY THERE.
HOW EMBARRASSING!
Botan Bookstore
THANKS AGAIN, TODA-KUN.
SURE.
GUESS I'LL BE GOING, THEN.
I SO TOTALLY DON'T BELONG HERE!

WHO...
...IS THAT!?
AND SHE'S...
POINK
POINK
HM?
WHOOP
ER... WELCOME?
...A TOTAL BABE!
OW! OW OW OW!
Great, a strange customer...

I WAS JUST HELPING HER CHOOSE A WORKBOOK FOR CLASS
Y-YOU SURE? I MEAN, WEREN'T YOU TWO TOGETHER?
SHE'S SO INTENSE-- IN LOOKS AND ATTITUDE!
THADUMP
THADUMP
THADUMP?
S-SO SHE'S IN YOUR CLASS?
SHE MUST BE PRETTY SMART THEN, HUH?
HUH?
OH YEAH SURE.
SHE'S GOT A GOOD HEAD ON HER SHOULDERS
ERICA, I MEAN
ERICA?!
YOU CALL HER BY HER FIRST NAME!?
...SURE SHE. . IS PRETTY.
...WHO'S SMART ENOUGH TO GET HELP FROM NATSU -- AND UNDERSTAND IT.
I BET SHE'S THE TYPE OF GIRL....
.....
BESIDES, EVERYONE JUST CALLS HER ERICA
I JUST DON'T REMEMBER HER LAST NAME, THAT'S ALL..

OH, AND AS FOR YOU.
HUH?
UH, YES?
GOOD-BYE!
REALLY SCARY!
strut strut strut
TURN
THAT WAS
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
DID SHE JUST THREATEN ME?
JUST WHO IS SHE?

...I'M JUST HAPPY KNOWING THAT I'M SPECIAL TO HIM.
I MAY NOT BE NATSU'S GIRLFRIEND, BUT...
LOOKS LIKE I HAVE SOME TIME BEFORE WORK.
HUH? DEPENDS ON WHAT?
HEY KA-JITSU
YOU WANNA HIT THE ARCADE?
I'M TOTALLY THERE!
WOO-HOO!
You bet!
HM?
HEY, ONII-CHAN?
DO YOU THINK I'M PRETTY?
BUT...
...STILL...

BLUNT
YEAH, SHE REALLY IS.
ERK!
BUT...
...A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE AROUND YOU, KAJITSU.
...I REALLY FEEL...
HEY!
IS THAT SUP-POSED TO BE...
IT DEPENDS.
...A COMPLI-MENT?

I SEE! WELL IF HE'S STUDYING LIKE A GOOD STUDENT, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN COMPLAIN ABOUT.
NEXT YEAR, HE'LL BE TAKING HIS COLLEGE EXAMS AFTER ALL!
OR MAYBE MEETING UP WITH FRIENDS FROM HIS LAST SCHOOL.
Don't tell Taro about my job!
HE'LL BE FINE!
HE MUST JUST BE STUDYING LATE.
WELL... FINALS ARE COMING UP.
IT'S THE APO-COLYPSE OF DEVIL-MAN!*
I oughtta buy this!
WOW!
He's not really thinking right now though.
Working
NATSU ALWAYS THINKS THINGS THROUGH.
*See translator's notes at back of book.
HUH?
HEY! WE'RE OUT OF BEER!
YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO BE HIDING ANYTHING FROM US, WOULD YOU?
BY THE WAY, ONII-CHAN.

SIGH
MY DEAR KAJITSU. TRY TO CHEER UP
JUST HOW THE HELL... ..IS THAT SUPPOSED TO CHEER ME UP!?
REMEMBER, IT'S NOT WHAT'S ON THE OUTSIDE THAT COUNTS.
BY THE WAY, NATSU SURE HAS BEEN COMING HOME LATE THESE DAYS, DONTCHA' THINK?
ER. .
...BUT MANO-CHAN STILL WINS THE CUTENESS-COMPETITION ANY DAY!
THAT GIRL WAS SO MATURE-LOOKING AND BEAUTIFUL...
Why me?
↑ Mercenary

NOW STUDENTS, BEING THAT YOUR CALLIGRAPHY TEACHER IS ABSENT TODAY. .
...YOU WILL ALL HAVE A FREE STUDY PERIOD
HMM
Say hello to papa!
HUCK
HUCK
I CERTAINLY CAN'T IMAGINE ONII-CHAN WITH HIS OWN KID.
MAYBE THAT WHOLE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD TALK WAS WRONG.
Just too funny!
HA HA HA!
I COULD DIE LAUGH-ING!
GOD, THAT'S TOO FUNNY!
.....

LIKE MAYBE HAVING...
...AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.
FOR INSTANCE
Illegitimate child_
...WHY DON'T YOU DO YOUR BIG BROTHER A FAVOR AND KEEP SOME BEER IN STOCK FOR HIM, HUH?
IF YOU'VE GOT ENOUGH EXTRA TIME TO THINK UP WILD STORIES LIKE THAT
SLAP
HYUCK
SLAP
WHAT A LAUGH!
HAR HAR HAR!
WHAT'S WITH THAT LAUGH?
Off to bed I go!
HA HA HA!
HA HA HA HA HA!

LET'S SEE, TAKE A LEFT AT THE CONVENIENCE STORE...
...AND A RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE VENDING MACHINE...
KUH-CLANK
A FOREIGN TOWN..
I DON'T KNOW THIS AREA.
SOMEHOW..
KUH-CLANK
BUT THEN...
...I'VE NEVER COME THIS WAY BEFORE
...GOING TO VISIT SOMEONE LIKE THIS..
KUH-CLANK
KUH-CLANK
...IS SORT OF...
...WONDERFUL.
BONK
HEY.

LOOK, WE'RE JUST FRIENDS!
ER, I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS OR ANYTHING, BUT—
AND JUST HOW WOULD YOU KNOW THAT?
GASP!
DING DING DING
.. DIDN'T HE SAY SOMETHING ABOUT NOT FEELING WELL YESTERDAY?
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO AKAI-SENSEI
Toda-san, my stomach hurts so much I could cry
Akai
UH-OH.
I SWEAR, THIS GUY...
.....
GO AHEAD AND CRY!
ON THE OTHER HAND, I'M THE ONE HEADED WILLINGLY TO HIS HOUSE.
BOY, AM I AN IDIOT.
HOW FAR IS HE WILLING TO GO TO USE PEOPLE!?
CLANK CLANK

I LIVE ALONE.
?
YOUR HOUSE? THEN WHEN WILL YOUR FAMILY BE GETTING BACK?
Y...
ER.. UH..
I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN!
SHOVE
HERE, TAKE THESE! AND GET BETTER SOON!
IN THAT CASE, I'VE GOT TO BE GOING!
OOOOKAY!
BUT YOU SEEM PERFECTLY FINE
GETTING COCKY
YOU'RE JUST GONNA LEAVE A POOR GUY LIKE ME? I COULD PASS OUT ANY SECOND!
AND YOU CALL YOURSELF HUMAN!
GLARE
YOU'RE GOING HOME?

SO YOU ACTUALLY CAME?
.....
WELL YOU SEEM ALRIGHT, SENSEI.
HA HA HA.
AFTER ALL, YOU GAVE SUCH DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS.
YES I DID.
MY STOMACH WAS UPSET SO I WENT OUT TO PICK UP SOME GROCERIES
MY HOUSE IS JUST THIS WAY.
What the hecks 'un-right?'
I'M FEELING VERY UN-RIGHT
OH, NO.

THANKS FOR INVITING ME..
...OVER..
RIGHT, RIGHT, RIGHT.
JUST A SHORT WHILE, OKAY? I'M SERIOUS!
Uph!
CLAMP
COME ON IN
HAVE A SEAT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK IN THERE
THAT WAY'S MY STUDIO.
MESSY
THIS PLACE IS A PIG-STY!

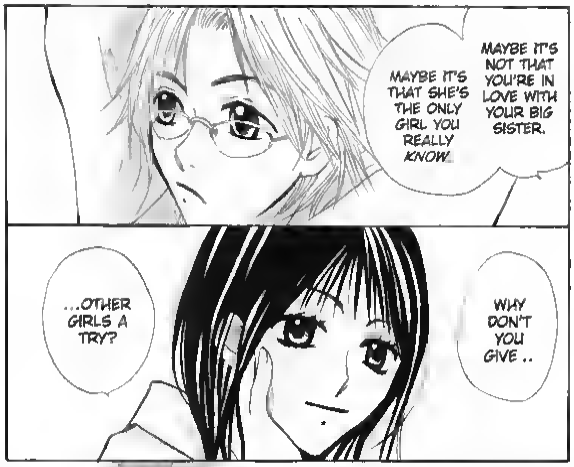
I'LL...
...ONLY STAY A WHILE, OKAY?
I HAVE TO..
...GET BACK TO SCHOOL..
SURE.

HEY, TODA-SAN?
YEAH, YEAH
YOU JUST LIE DOWN AND RELAX, SENSEI!
I'LL BE DONE IN A SEC.
...COME, ANYWAY?
JUST WHY DID YOU...
THAT'S ALL!
...WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
I WAS...

SWING
SWING
LEAVE THE COOKING TO ME!
YOU JUST LIE DOWN, SENSEI!
All right!
THANKS BUT NO!
ONCE I'M FINISHED WITH KITCHEN-DUTY, I'M LEAVING!
WHOA WHOA WHOA WHOA WHOA!
HUG
HUG
REALLY?
YOU'D MAKE ME SOMETHING TO EAT?
WELL, TURN IT OFF OR I'M GOING HOME!
YES, MA'AM
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT SEEING A GIRL LIKE YOU IN THE KITCHEN THAT JUST TURNS ME ON
Don't wanna hear it!
SORRY
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?

ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH ANYONE AT THE MOMENT?
SO YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE?
NOPE.
NOT PARTICULARLY.
ABOUT YESTERDAY'S WORKBOOK? HOW WAS IT?
COULD I ASK YOU SOMETHING, TODA-KUN?
THANKS FOR YESTERDAY
NO, NOT THAT
BEEP!
IT'S 'CAUSE YOU'VE GOT A THING FOR YOUR BIG SISTER, RIGHT?
NO ONE HAD EVER DONE THAT TO ME BEFORE
I WAS SO UPSET I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
DID THAT REALLY UPSET HER?
I guess it was pretty rude of me.
YOU SEE, NORMALLY A GUY WOULD NEVER JUST LEAVE THE GIRL HE'S SHOPPING WITH TO GO HOME WITH HIS SISTER.

LIBRARY
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
COULD TARO HAVE AN ILLEGITIMATE KID?
Hmmm...
NOW THAT TESTS ARE SO NEAR...
OH.
...IT'S NICE GETTING SO MUCH INDEPENDENT STUDY TIME.


MAYBE IT'S NOT THAT YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH YOUR BIG SISTER.
MAYBE IT'S THAT SHE'S THE ONLY GIRL YOU REALLY KNOW.
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ..
...OTHER GIRLS A TRY?

NO.
YOU'RE FRUS-TRATING.
BUT THAT'S WHAT I...
...LIKE ABOUT YOU.
THIS IS GETTING BAD
LISTEN, TODA-KUN..

GO OUT WITH ME!
I LIKE YOU.
SORRY ABOUT THAT.

.. SINCE THE ONLY PERSON I REALLY LIKED IN MIDDLE SCHOOL WAS SUBARU.
HEE-HEE! HEE-HEE!
I NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT GIRLS...
Hmmm...
YOU HAVEN'T, HAVE YOU?
TODA-KUN, HAVE YOU EVER GONE OUT WITH A GIRL?
WHY DON'T YOU ASK SOMEONE ELSE?
SORRY, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED.
Sheesh.

YES
ALL RIGHT
SOME-TIME NEXT WEEK, THEN.
SHE DOESN'T NEED TO TELL ME THAT.
SIGH
CLATCH

BUT WITH ME...
...YOU'LL HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE.
YOU SHOULDN'T HOLD OUT FOR A SIBLING
IT'LL ONLY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED
THINK ABOUT IT.
IT'LL ONLY CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED
WHAT A STRANGE GIRL.

I DON'T NEED...
...ANYTHING ELSE.
I DON'T NEED MUCH TO BE HAPPY.
I'M FINE WITH JUST THIS.
MM...

...I WOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY
IF I SAW HER NOW...
NO.
ARE YOU GOING TO GO SEE HER?
TARO?
I'M SURE SHE'D BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU. YOU'RE THE ONLY FAMILY SHE HAS LEFT
BUT YOU SEND HER MONEY EVERY MONTH
THIS HOUSE...
..IS THE ONLY FAMILY I HAVE.
IT'S SETTLED AND I'M FINE WITH IT!

SENSEI
WE CAN'T.

...OF YOU
...TO TAKE CARE...
I JUST WANTED..

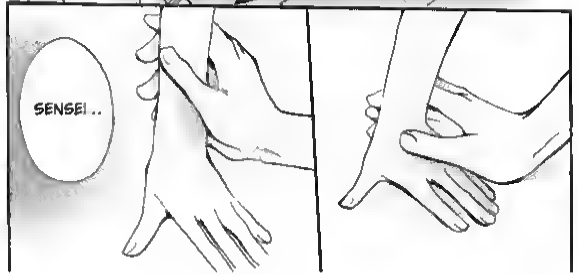
THAT'S ALL.
SOMETHING'S CHANGING DEEP INSIDE, WHERE I CAN'T SEE IT...

PLEASE DON'T TAKE MY SAFE HOME AWAY FROM ME...

. AS SOON AS YOU'VE FINISHED EATING. SHOULD I HEAT IT UP FOR YOU?
BUT YOU DIDN'T LEAVE.
I'LL LEAVE..
THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
NO.

YUP.
IT'S ONLY BEEN HALF AN HOUR, THOUGH.
OH, DID I FALL ASLEEP?

.....


SENSEI..

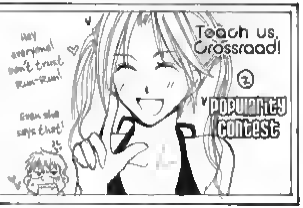
#18 Scent

I wish... I could!
Why do I have to do this...
What did you say?

PLEASE PROTECT ME...
...ONII-CHAN.

TODAY WAS A LITTLE HOTTER THAN USUAL.
I'D COME STRAIGHT HERE FROM SCHOOL (I'D EVEN RUN FROM THE TRAIN STATION).
AND ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS...
...DON'T I...

I've never done an official popularity contest for my characters, but this is what I've discerned from the letters I receive: Aki-san & Ko-jiyu are in first place, followed by Natsu, Taihito & Mano, and last of all Taro. I'm surprised by how many of my male readers like Rumiko best! And all my coworkers say they love Taro the most! (It seems even my editor likes Taro.) It's funny that the total scores are so scattered! It's a good thing Setouchi's pretty good at handling all these strange characters (ha ha). (But that kid's getting pretty strange herself...)



BEEP
KAJITSU-CHAN, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?
SCARY
MY PHONE.

ARE YOU OKAY?
TEACHER'S NOT DOING ANYTHING FUNNY TO YOU, IS HE!?
SHOULD I CALL THE POLICE?
WHEN YOU DIDN'T COME BACK IMMEDIATELY, I WAS WORRIED SICK!
MANO-CHAN...

EACH RAY IS SO BRIGHT.
THE SUNLIGHT STREAMING THROUGH THE CURTAINED WINDOWS IS BRILLIANT.
I CAN HEAR THE CARS DRIVING BY OUTSIDE
WHY AM I...
...SO CALM?
JINGLE JINGLE
JINGLE JINGLE

SIGH
SENSEI...
OH!
...I'M LEAVING NOW.
YEAH.

AHEM
DON'T WORRY, AKAI-SENSEI'S A PERFECT GENTLEMAN!
I'M FINE.
UH...
NO...
BEEP
SEE YOU LATER
YUP.
OKAY, SORRY I'M LEAVING NOW.
?
TOSS
BLEEP
SO, DID YOU SCORE?
Toma
Awright!

I KEPT TELLING MYSELF THAT, TOO.
"I SHOULDN'T BE HERE"
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD COME OVER ANYMORE
...I CAME IN HERE WITH YOU.
I KEPT THINKING THAT UNTIL...

.. SENSEI.
I'LL COME BY AGAIN...

OOPS!
DO YOU KNOW... ...WHERE MY...
...OTHER SOCK...
...WENT?

TODA-SAN.

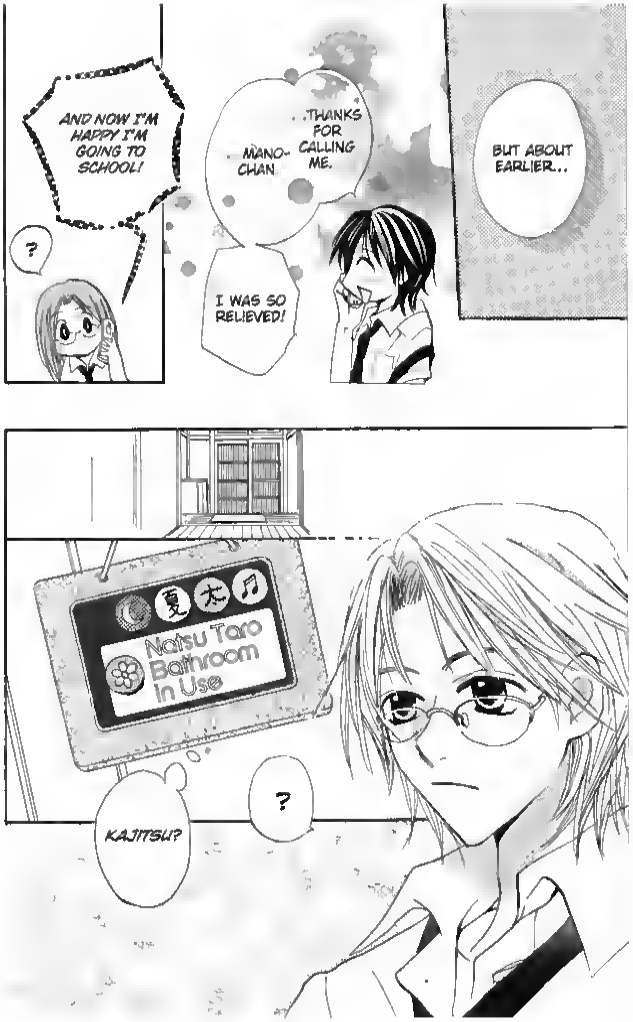
...THE TRUTH
AND THAT'S..
EVEN THOUGH YOU TEASE ME ALL THE TIME...
I LIKE IT BETTER...
SUDDENLY HE DIDN'T SMELL...
...SO STRONGLY OF INK.
SENSEI...
...WHEN YOU'RE AROUND.
SUDDENLY...
...GET BETTER SOON.

PAT
I'M HAPPY...
...YOU CAME.

..LIKE I'M IN A DREAM.
KUH-CLANK
KUH-CLANK
IT STILL FEELS...
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT STILL BE THERE
I WAS...
..SO WORRIED!
I STAYED A LITTLE LONGER AFTER MAKING HIM SOME FOOD
SORRY!
YUP.
OKAY.
DON'T THINK I'LL MAKE IT IN TIME FOR HOME-ROOM, THOUGH
I'M ON MY WAY BACK NOW.

...HE JUST SMELLED LIKE SENSEI.
KUH-CLANK
KUH-CLANK
KUH-CLANK

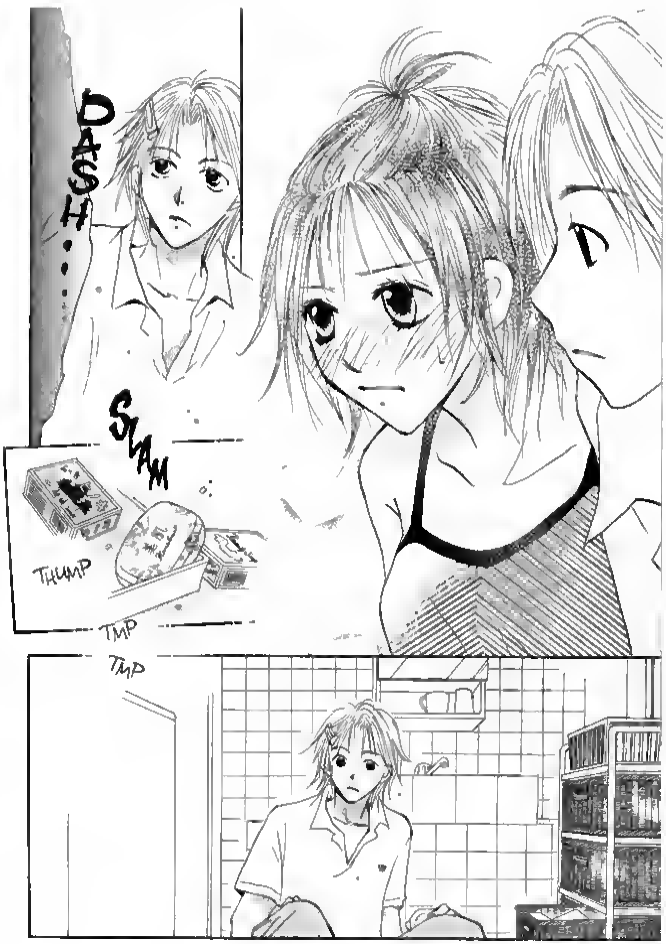
UH, IS IT ALL RIGHT IF I USE IT NOW?
OH, THERE YOU ARE
WHY IS SHE TAKING A SHOWER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY?
ふふふ
OH! YOU'RE HOME!
S-SURE, GO AHEAD!
I'm done!
NATSU...


AND NOW I'M HAPPY I'M GOING TO SCHOOL!
?
MANO-CHAN
THANKS FOR CALLING ME.
I WAS SO RELIEVED!
BUT ABOUT EARLIER...
Natsu Taro Bathroom In Use
KAJITSU?
?

IT'S SENSEI...
IT'S NOT THE SOAP.
NATSU... THIS SCENT IS...

...DO WE HAVE ANY MORE SOAP?
THIS ONE'S ALMOST GONE.
BY THE WAY...
I SEE
IT WAS SO HOT TODAY I HAD TO TAKE AN EARLY SHOWER!
SCRUB
SCRUB
I... stank!
Na-chan's "lathered-in-soap" look!
YEAH...
OH...
HMM..
WHICH DO YOU WANT -- ROSE OR CYPRESS?
RUMMAGE
YOU MIND USING THE GIFT SOAP? IT SMELLS A LITTLE STRONG BUT...
SORRY, I REALLY SHOULD BUY MORE.
RUMMAGE

I'M SUPPOSED TO LOVE NATSU SO MUCH!
MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD!
SO WHY CAN'T I...
...STOP THINKING ABOUT SENSEI?


DASH...
SWAM
THUMP
TMP
TMP

I'M NOT AS PURE AS YOU THINK I AM.
I'M SORRY I CAN'T BE..
...AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU ARE.

I CARE ABOUT YOU, KAJITSU.
I HAVE NO RIGHT!
I LOVE YOU.
I'M SO SORRY
...THAT I LOVE HIM SO MUCH.
I CAN'T EVER TELL NATSU!
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY IT.

Vol. 4
Bonus Story
Don't you think Narchan looks really good as a king on the cover of this volume? (ha ha)
Now about the chapter title, "Scent." I was bent on keeping it as "Fragrance" up until the last moment. But I'm just glad now that I didn't write "scent" in katakana huh? (ha ha)
I plan on carving out Natsu's character even more in volume 5.
♥
Natsu
*See translator's notes at back of book
SO BUT.. WHAT IF I WENT TO K HIGH, TOO?
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.
Girl's Bathroom
HE SITS NEXT TO YOU, RIGHT?
YOU'VE STILL GOT A CHANCE!
YOU DON'T THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME..?
YOU'RE BOTH HUMAN, RIGHT?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
YEAH, BUT...
YOU GOTTA FIGHT!
SLAM
Hm?

...APOLOGIZING TO YOU?
WHY AM I ALWAYS...
IT'S 'CAUSE YOU'VE GOT A THING FOR YOUR BIG SISTER, RIGHT?
NATSU...

TODA-KUN SURE IS A GREAT GUY.
HE'S SMART, GOOD AT SPORTS, KIND, SENSIBLE, AND SO MUCH FUN TO BE AROUND.
I'M PRETTY SURE...
She's such a bitch!
I WAS ASKING THE GIRL HIDING BEHIND YOU.
I'M NOT TALKING TO YOU
YEAH, AND WHAT IF SHE DOES?
.....
SIGH
HOW DO I PUT THIS?
BUT AS FOR YOU, MATSUOKA-SAN
...I'VE GOT A CHANCE OF GETTING HIM.

YOU UGLY COW.
WAKE UP AND SMELL THE MAKE-UP.

UGH!
IT'S ERICA.
She was in there?
FLUSH
BUBBLE
BUBBLE
SPEAKING OF WHICH, MATSUOKA-SAN...
...IS IT TRUE YOU HAVE A CRUSH ON HIM?
DIDN'T YOU GO HOME WITH TODA-KUN THE OTHER DAY?
N-NOTHING
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "UGH"?
HUSH
YEAH SO?

...ISN'T ENVIOUS OF ANOTHER, HM?
AND JUST WHAT TYPE OF GIRL...
WHAT?
...AND IS COMPLETELY AND TOTALLY FORGETTABLE?
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE TYPE OF GIRL WHO'S PLAIN-LOOKING, HAS TROUBLE GETTING A GUY...
WHAT TYPE OF...
.. WHAT?
.....
WHAT'S WRONG?
?
STOP
AT LEAST YOUR PARENTS BLESSED YOU WITH A PRETTY FACE
MY GOOD-NESS! THOSE ARE THE WORST!
HMPH
Every time you open your mouth, an enemy comes out

RANT
UGH, I HATE THAT GIRL SO MUCH!
AND IT PISSES ME OFF EVEN MORE THAT ALL THE GUYS LOVE HER!
HOW CAN MEN BE SO STUPID? DON'T THEY REALIZE WHAT A SNAKE SHE IS!?
FUME
ERICA, YOU DONE IN THERE?
COM-ING--!
OH NO!
ERICA, HOW COULD YOU!?
Don't let her see you cry!
Waaaah!
WHY, YOU--!
SOB SOB
SOB
LET'S GO
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEIR PROBLEM IS
I'M JUST SAYING YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL
PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO GET REALLY JEALOUS OF YOU.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN.
Go to Hell, You Carnivorous BITCH!

OH!
YOU'RE TODA-KUN'S OLDER SISTER, RIGHT? ♡
NICE TO SEE YOU! SO WHERE DID YOU TWO GO AFTER I LEFT?
OH, JUST AN ARCADE.
WE TRIED TO GET THE COW AND FROG PLUSHIES, BUT..
...WE DIDN'T.
OH, RE-ALLY?
SMILE ♡

strut
strut
strut
HEY, ISN'T THAT TODA-KUN'S OLDER SIS-
NO! DON'T DO IT!
ERICA!
Guess this is a new brand
TWIST
ERI-
STOP
--CA.

WOW.
SHE REALLY IS PRETTY.
AND SO GROWN-UP, AND I HEAR SHE'S A STRAIGHT-A STUDENT TOO!
NATSU WOULD GET ALONG BEST WITH A SMART GIRL LIKE HER
YOU KNOW, IT'S LIKE..
...NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY....
...I'LL NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR NATSU.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? DON'T GIVE UP!
DON'T MIND HER!
FWAP

WHO WAS THAT?
A CLASSMATE OF NATSU'S.
I DIDN'T THINK SHE'D BE SO NICE!
AND SO EASY TO TALK TO!
SOUNDS LIKE IT WAS FUN!
I WISH I COULD'VE COME, TOO!
OH! YOU CAN TOTALLY COME WITH US NEXT TIME!
THANKS!
WELL THEN...
SEE YOU LATER!

OH!
YOU ARE A LESBIAN, AFTER ALL.
OH, YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT
THE NERVE!
I DON'T WANT TO BE POPULAR WITH THE GUYS!
SEE, IT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T THINK THINGS THROUGH THAT YOU'RE NOT POPULAR WITH THE GUYS.
YOU SLY LITTLE...
TODA-KUN!
GRIN
DID YOU THINK ABOUT IT?
ABOUT WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY.
strut
strut
TURN
strut
Let's go.

WOW, ERICA..
I REALLY THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA START A FIGHT.
SERI-OUSLY!
WHY DID YOU THINK THAT?
WELL, BECAUSE YOU TOLD ME SHE PISSED YOU OFF
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA TEASE HER LIKE THAT OTHER GIRL.
LISTEN.
SHE'S THE ONLY FRIEND NATSU SEEMS TO HAVE
I'D BE SHOOTING MYSELF IN THE FOOT IF I MADE HER AN ENEMY
UNDER-STAND NOW?

SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT, SO SHE'D LIKE TO SEE YOU ONE MORE TIME, TARO-CHAN.
AND IF SHE'S FOUND HERSELF A NEW FAMILY AND IS GETTING ALONG FINE, THEN-
SHE'S THE ONE WHO WENT OFF AND DECIDED TO GET RE-MARRIED
WHAT? IN THE HOSPITAL?
..RATHER THAN SEEING HER FACE TO FACE.
X X BANK
I WAS SENDING HER MONEY EVERY MONTH..
IT'LL BE HARDER TO FACE YOU ALL AFTER THIS
LOOKS LIKE THE DAY HAS FINALLY COME
I'M SORRY GUYS

FACE IT, HE JUST COMPLETELY BLEW YOU OFF!
IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY?
HEH HEH!
AH HA SO THAT'S HOW HE'S GONNA PLAY IT.
THIS GIRL'S GOT WAY TOO MUCH PRIDE

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
SLAM
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME ANYMORE.
PUFF PUFF
Man, it's hot!
BEEP BEEP BEEP

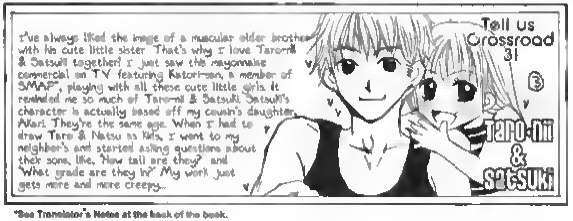
TURN
MY, WHAT AN EMPTY LIFE YOU MUST HAVE
I'VE LIVED MY LIFE SO THAT I COULD DRINK THIS ONE BEER!
DO IT YOURSELF! I DON'T DRINK BEER, SO WHY SHOULD I CARE?
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO REFRIGERATE THE BEER!?
WHAT THE HELL!?
OOOH, NOTHING, NOTHING AT ALL...
GROWL
WHAT DID YOU SAY!?
WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME?
IS SOMETHING HAPPENING?
...I'M GOING OUT.
BY THE WAY, NEXT SUNDAY...
PAT
PAT
ONII-CHAN?
WHAT IS IT?
?
HMM...

SIGH
IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO YEARS
SHE SURE HAS LIVED A LONG LIFE.
AND EVEN AFTER YOU FIND OUT, I HOPE WE CAN LIVE TOGETHER AGAIN
I PROMISE TO BE THE BEST BIG BROTHER I CAN NEXT TIME I SEE YOU.
Friends Forever
MAYBE I SHOULD...
...PAY HER A VISIT.

#13 Onii-chan

KNOCK IT OFF!
You're freaking me out!
ARE THESE YOUR LAST WORDS OR SOMETHING?
Ow ow ow
You idiot!
IT WAS ONLY LATER...
...HOW LUCKY I AM TO HAVE ALL OF YOU.
SURFI
I WAS JUST THINKING..

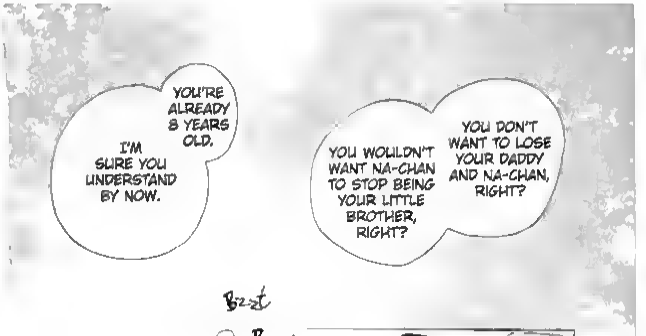
...WHY HE'D SAID IT.
...THAT I UNDERSTOOD..
NOOGIE NOOGIE
Take that!
Cut it out!
SURF


I've always liked the image of a macular older brother with his cute little sister. That's why I love Taromi & Satsuki together! I just saw the mayonnaise commercial on TV featuring Katori-san, a member of SMAP, playing with all these cute little girls. It reminded me so much of Taromi & Satsuki. Satsuki's character is actually based off my cousin's daughter, Akari. They're the same age. When I had to draw Taro & Natsu as kids, I went to my neighbor's and started asking questions about their sons, like, "How tall are they?" and "What grade are they in?" My work just gets more and more creepy...
Tell us Crossroad 31
TARO-kun & SATSUKI

*See Translator's Notes at the back of the book.

JUMP
FLOP
ACK!
TARO-NII!
GWAOZ-MO!
C'MON!
HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA SLEEP FOR?
YOU'LL BE LATE FOR WORK!

THEN LET'S HAVE ROLLY SUSHI!
REALLY?
YAWN
SAT-SUKI ..
NII-CHAN DOESN'T HAVE WORK TODAY.
NNNG


I'M SURE YOU UNDERSTAND BY NOW.
YOU'RE ALREADY 8 YEARS OLD.
YOU WOULDN'T WANT NA-CHAN TO STOP BEING YOUR LITTLE BROTHER, RIGHT?
YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOUR DADDY AND NA-CHAN, RIGHT?

Bz-zt
Bz-zt
DRIBBLE
IT'S SO COLD!
MUNCH MUNCH

BZZT WA WA WA WA
Meep
Meep
Meep
Meep
Meep
Meep
Meep
SPLAT

hard time?
SATSUKI'S JUST GIVING ONII-CHAN A HARD TIME
WHAT'S GOING ON UP THERE?
SHE'S ONLY LIKE THAT WITH ONII-CHAN
SHE NEVER BEGS FOR ANYTHING FROM US.
EEEEEEEGH!
SINCE WHEN DID SATSUKI TURN INTO SUCH A WILD CHILD?
What happened to my elegant disciplining?
...IS THE EASIEST ONE ..
...TO PUSH AROUND
...KNOWS THAT "TARO-NII"...
I GUESS SAT-SUKI...

OH..
I DID?
YOU SAID YOU'D TAKE ME FOR ROLLY SUSHI ON YOUR NEXT DAY OFF!
"ROLLY SUSHI!"?
Do you mean revolving sushi?
NII-CHAN...
...HAS AN IMPORTANT MEETING TODAY.
I'M SORRY, SAT-SUKI
WE'LL GET SUSHI ANOTHER DAY.
HUH?
OWW!
AAAAGH!
THUNK
CRASH
BOOM
YOWCH! OW OW OW!
STRETCH

YOU'RE HAVING WAY TOO MUCH FUN WITH THIS
TARGET IN SIGHT! HE'S PASSING THROUGH THE TICKET GATE!
HE'S NOW EN ROUTE TO THE STAIRS!
CONTINUE THE PURSUIT! ROGER!
...I'LL DO ANYTHING IN MY POWER TO GET IT!
AND IF IT'S SOMETHING REALLY JUICY...
I'LL FINALLY HAVE SOME DIRT ON HIM!
I'M MERELY CONCERNED FOR THE WELL-BEING OF MY DEAREST OLDER BROTHER. I CAN ALMOST TASTE IT NOW...
OKAY, NOW YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO SCARE ME
FAREWELL, OPPRESSION!
MWA HA HA HA!
THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS! I COULD MAKE HIM SQUIRM FOR AN ETERNITY!

HUH?
SPEAKING OF WHICH, ISN'T IT ODD THAT TARO HAS SUNDAY OFF?
I THINK HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO VISIT SOMEONE
BUT HE WOULDN'T TELL ME WHO
MAYBE HE REALLY DOES HAVE AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.
!!!
Another helping of donut...
SO, YOU GOING?
YOU BET I AM!

WHY WOULD HE HIDE THAT FROM US?
HE'S VISITING SOMEONE HERE?
Flowers
ONII-CHAN...
...JUST WHO DID YOU COME TO SEE?
⬅Ward 2
Reception➡

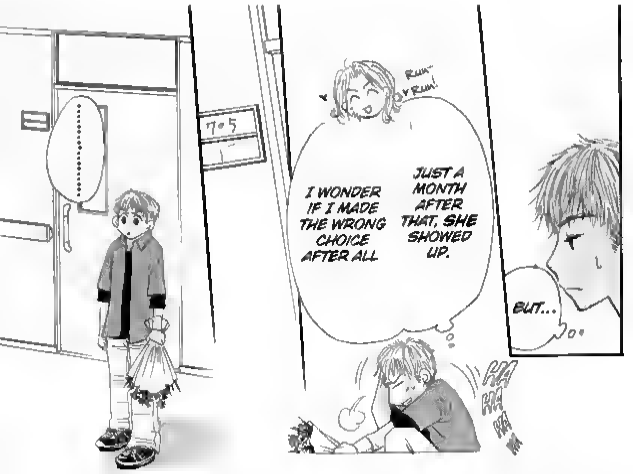
Please press the button if you are getting off
Next stop, XXX Hospital. Front station.
Taro
Good thing the train's crowded
PSSSH
WHISPER
WHISPER
Feels like we're secret government spies!
Yeah yeah
A HOSPITAL?

I WAS 8 YEARS OLD.
AND NATSU WAS ONLY 3
DON'T WORRY, I'M THERE FOR YOU
I'LL PROTECT YOU
NO MORE CRYING.
NII-CHAAAAAN!
SQUEEZE
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
I KNEW...
...I HAD TO BE STRONG.
...WITH DADDY AND NATSU
I'M STAYING HERE...
I...
I'M NOT GOING

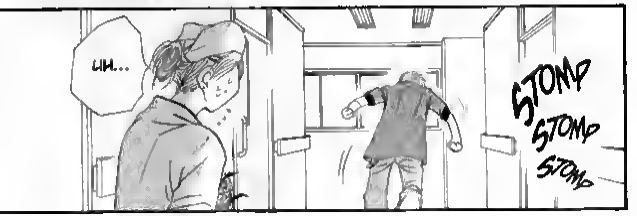
WAHAAA
Fatty little fat fat! Fatty little fat fat!
Go ahead and cry!
WAHAAA
WAHAAA
Oh!
Bzzt
Wa
Wa
Wa!
PUNCH
FRIGGIN' HOOLA-WALLA!
Translation: What do you think you're doing, you hoodlum!?
I'M SORRRRRRY!
SOB
SOB
NATSU, I TOLD YOU NOT TO GET TOO FAR FROM ME!
AND DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH MY LITTLE BROTHER AGAIN!
RAWR

IF THAT'S...
...WHAT YOU WANT, TARO.
...LEAVE BY YOURSELF.
IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE...
IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE US, THEN GO AHEAD.
HONESTLY...

...WHAT I REALLY WANTED TO HEAR WAS...
"I'LL TAKE YOU ALL WITH ME."
"LET'S STAY A FAMILY TOGETHER."


1705
RUN! RUN!
I WONDER IF I MADE THE WRONG CHOICE AFTER ALL
JUST A MONTH AFTER THAT, SHE SHOWED UP.
BUT...
PLEASE

HUH?
THIS
BRING THESE TO...
PLEASE
...THE WOMAN IN THERE.
YES?
UM!


UH...
STOMP STOMP STOMP

HIS MOTHER.
IT'S TARO'S ..
...MOTHER.

I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS

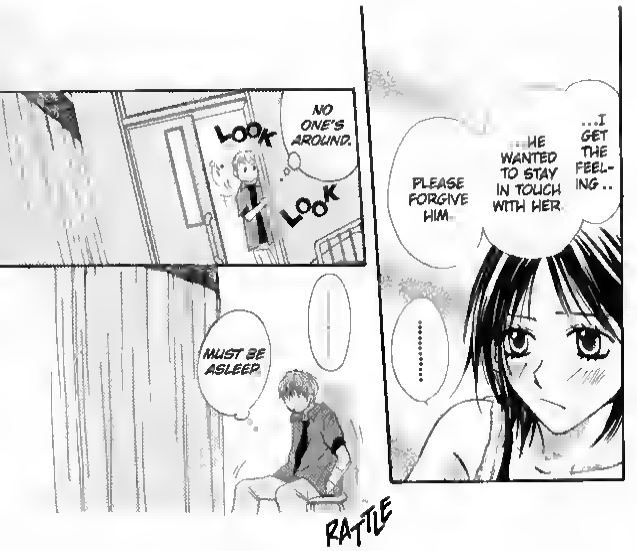
Waiting Area

NATSU?
?
?
ONII-CHA-
OW!
THIS WAS THE DOOR HE STOPPED IN FRONT OF!

...ISN'T IT GOOD JUST TO KNOW THAT SHE'S ALIVE?
SO WHAT IF SHE SAYS THAT?
EVEN IF SHE'S JUST COMPLAINING AND BITCHING AT YOU...
...WHENEVER YOU'RE IN A BIND LIKE THIS...
EVEN THOUGH YOU ACT TOUGH.
MAKE SURE...
I'LL KNOCK YOU INTO NEXT WEEK FOR THAT!
That's more like it.
LUME LUME LUME
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SNAP
...YOU TURN INTO A BIG CHICKEN.
H.M.P.!!

HOW COULD I?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ANY OF US?
THE PERSON YOU'VE BEEN SENDING MONEY TO WAS YOUR MOTHER, WASN'T IT?
KAJITSU ALREADY WENT HOME
WE FOLLOWED YOU HERE
BLUNT
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?
BLUNT
OH..
BLUNT
WHAT ARE YOU--?
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SEEING HER?
I WASN'T ABOUT TO PARADE THE FACT THAT I DO.
YOU AND KAJITSU DON'T HAVE A REAL MOTHER
EVEN IF I DO SEE HER, SHE'LL ONLY SAY HOW ANGRY AND DISAPPOINTED SHE IS WITH ME!
And it's not exactly easy now that she's sick!
GO SEE HER.
Out-Patient Reception
EVEN NOW, I'M THINKING ABOUT JUST LEAVING.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE I WAS ELEVEN.

...ONII-CHAN COMES HOME WITH YOU, OKAY?
HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, WON'T HE?
Damn him, that violent jerk!
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S ALWAYS BAD-MOUTHING HIM. HUH.
SINCE WHEN DOES SHE LIKE TARO SO MUCH?
Total jealousy
I WONDER IF..
...ONII-CHAN WILL GO LIVE WITH HIS MOTHER NOW.
WAVER
I'm home.
RATTLE
ONEE-CHAN!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
WAAAAAH!
WAAAAAH!
S-SATSUKI!? WHAT'S THE MATTER?
TARO-NII!
IS HE...IS HE REALLY GOING TO LIVE WITH HIS OWN MOMMY!?
HUH?
WAAAAAH!
WAAAAAH!
I DON'T WANT THAT!
IS HE GOING TO STOP BEING MY BIG BROTHER?
IS TARO-NII EVER GOING TO COME HOME AGAIN?


NO ONE'S AROUND.
LOOK
LOOK
MUST BE ASLEEP.
RATTLE
PLEASE FORGIVE HIM.
...HE WANTED TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH HER.
...I GET THE FEELING..

I DIDN'T PLAN ON EVER SEEING YOU AGAIN
A LOT OF STUFF'S HAPPENED.
SO I WASN'T SURE WHAT I'D HAVE TO SAY IF I DID TALK TO YOU
BUT TODAY..
...THERE'S SOMETHING..
..THAT I WANT TO TELL YOU

ALL THIS TIME, I NEVER KNEW
ONII-CHAN'S BEEN HIDING THE FACT THAT HE HAS A MOTHER
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE...
..THAT SATSUKI COULD CRY THAT MUCH.
SNORE
SNORE
SUSHI?
I WON'T ASK FOR SUSHI ANYMORE!
SATSUKI WILL BE A GOOD GIRL!
ONEE-CHAAAAN!
ONEE-CHAAAAN!
WAAAH!
WAAAH!
THEY NEVER SAW EACH OTHER OR EVEN TALKED MUCH.
HE'S ONLY BEEN SENDING HER MONEY FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.
EVEN THOUGH HE USED TO TALK ABOUT HER BEING SO CRUEL AND LEAVING HIM..
3.

...I THINK I CAN DO THIS
AS LONG AS I HAVE A FAMILY TO COME HOME TO...
IT'S HARD WORK, BUT...
...I'LL LIVE THROUGH IT.
THAT'S WHY I DON'T WANT..
...YOU TO GIVE UP, EITHER.

I'VE MADE A FAMILY.
...BUT IT'S MY FAMILY
WE MIGHT BE A LITTLE AND CLUMSY AND TORN...
AND ONE USELESS MOTHER
I'VE GOT MY YOUNGER BROTHER, NATSU, AND TWO LITTLE SISTERS
...LEAVING SOMETIMES...
EVEN IF I MAY FEEL LIKE...
...IN MY LIFE
IT'S THE ONLY REALLY IMPORTANT THING...

WAVE
WAVE
KAJITSU! IT'S GETTING LATE!
SHE REALLY HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL SINCE WE WERE KIDS.
SATSUKI, OF ALL PEOPLE!
SATSUKI WAS BAWLING HER EYES OUT!

HEY, NATSU!
LET'S WALK HOME ON THE RIVERBANK
WHY THAT WAY?
IT'LL TAKE LONGER.
THAT DOESN'T MATTER.
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS
SEE FOR YOURSELF
Take that!
PLUNK
I GOT A HUNCH KAJITSU WILL BE THERE

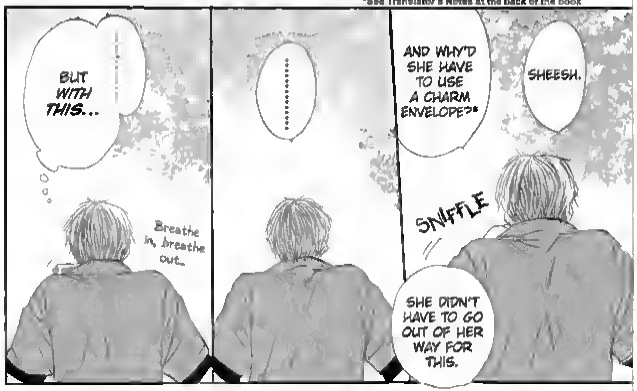
...IS...
...THE WORST!
...LIVING ALONE...
...THAT I'VE COME THIS FAR.
IT'S BECAUSE I HAVE ALL OF YOU...
YOU'RE RIGHT!
PEL!

YOU HAVE TO STAY!
YOU CAN'T LEAVE US, ONII-CHAN!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN HIDING THIS FROM US AND RUNNING OFF TO VISIT HER!
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT, ONII-CHAN!
WE'D ALL FALL APART IF YOU LEFT!
YOU MADE OUR HOME!
BUT...
YOU SAID THAT EVERYONE LIVES ALONE YOU SAID THAT WAS NORMAL!
YOU TOLD ME ONCE, ONII-CHAN
IF YOU HADN'T COME HOME. . .
...I SWEAR I WOULD'VE SLUGGED YOU!

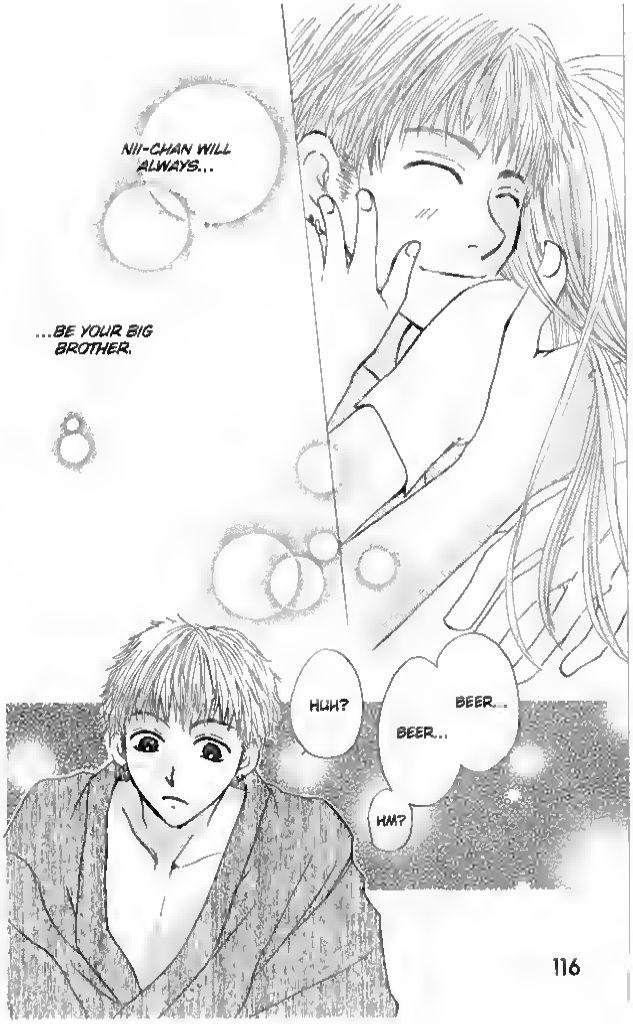
DWUH!?
I BET IT'S A TEARFUL, HEARTFELT MESSAGE OF ALL THE THINGS SHE COULDN'T SAY TO HER OWN SON
IT'S A LETTER.
THE ONE I SENT HER
THIS IS MY PASSBOOK!
WHAT THE--? SHE NEVER USED ANY OF IT!?
I PUT MY BLOOD AND SWEAT AND TEARS INTO THIS, AND SHE THANKS ME BY IGNORING IT?
AND ALL OF MY SAVINGS, TOO!
Please use it for your family
Thank you for giving

THIS ONE THING...

*See Translator's Notes at the back of the book


BUT WITH THIS...
Breathe in, breathe out...
AND WHY'D SHE HAVE TO USE A CHARM ENVELOPE?*
SHEESH.
SNIFFLE
SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO OUT OF HER WAY FOR THIS.

HUH?
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
Shut up! Do it yourself!
Remember to cool the beer!
FOR SOME REASON...
...I FIND THIS SO AMUSING!
HA HA HA


NII-CHAN WILL ALWAYS...
...BE YOUR BIG BROTHER.
HUH?
BEER...
BEER...
HM?

20 Calling

.....
SO YOU'LL GO OUT WITH ME?
ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE.
Not yet, huh?
SURE.
LET'S... GO OUT.

crossroad Chapter 20: Calling

In volume 3, I was getting a lot of fan mail saying how happy they were that Kajitsu was getting cuter. It makes me so happy to hear that! (Yippee!) Back in volume 1, Kajitsu was still just a child, but after being influenced by Runko and Akai, I'm having a lot of fun writing how she's changing. I still want her to accept more change into her life, so that she'll become a more charming girl. Let's all watch what Kajitsu grows and evolves into together! Please enjoy the rest of the series with her, as well.

YEAH, IT'S THE WEEK BEFORE FINALS
BUT THERE ISN'T ANY CLUB MEETING TOMORROW.
ALL OF YOU BEGIN YOUR LESSONS.
I'LL ASK HER ABOUT IT TOMORROW
PAH
GUESS WHO?

OH! AND D-DON'T THINK WE EVER BULLIED HER OR ANYTHING!
RIGHT. AND SHE HARDLY EVER TALKED.
EVEN WHEN TODA-SEMPAI DID COME, SHE'D JUST LEAVE WITHOUT EVEN CLEANING UP!
Club President
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT! DO YOU THINK WE HURT HER FEELINGS?
THUMP THUMP
SURE WE NEVER BULLIED HER, BUT WE CERTAINLY IGNORED HER ENOUGH.
I WONDER WHY SHE EVEN JOINED?
BUT DID YOU GUYS EVER GET THE FEELING THAT TODA-SAN WASN'T REALLY INTERESTED IN CALLIGRAPHY TO START WITH?
WHO WAS IT THAT INVITED HER ANYWAY?
AND WE HAVEN'T EVEN TAUGHT HER ABOUT BIJI HAPPO YET!
WHAT DO YOU SAY WE ALL GO OVER AND SEE HOW SHE'S DOING?
THROB
Conscious circuit
Ring Leader
WE'RE SO SORRY, TODA-SAN!

LISTEN, TODA.
ERICA'S BEST FRIEND.
IT'S ME! HAYAMI!
WHO?
I GIVE UP.
CLATTER
IRRITATED
UH. SOMEONE I KNOW?
JEEZ, WHAT A BORE!
DON'T!
ABOUT YOU AND ERICA GOING OUT.

DON'T GET TAKEN IN BY HER LOOKS.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO!
OFFICIAL OR NOT, I DON'T CARE!
TODA..
YES, I TOLD HER I'D GO OUT WITH HER.
...BUT IT'S NOT OFFICIAL YET.
IS ERICA REALLY THAT BAD A PERSON?
HAYAMI-SAN, PLEASE.
...AND THEY ALL PRETTY MUCH SAID, "PLEASE, CHOOSE ANYONE BUT ERICA!"
TODAY ALONE AT LEAST TEN GIRLS CAME UP TO ME...
WHAT!?
Not her! Anyone but her!
Just don't go for Erica!
You make number eleven
Wipe
Wipe

WE HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS.
BZZ
WHAT?
YOU MEAN...
YOU DON'T EVEN...
...LIKE ERICA?

IF SHE REALLY WAS LIKE THEY SAY SHE IS, I DON'T THINK SHE'D HAVE A FRIEND LIKE YOU.
BUT...
...MIGHT JUST BE A MISUNDER-STANDING.
THEY ALWAYS SAY THAT ABOUT HER.
THAT..
SHE'S INFATUATED BECAUSE I'M NEW TO HER.
SHE'LL LOSE INTEREST IN ME SOON.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY
IF YOU KNOW SHE'LL GET TIRED OF YOU, WHY GO OUT WITH HER AT ALL?
?
ONCE WE START GOING OUT, SHE'LL GET BORED.

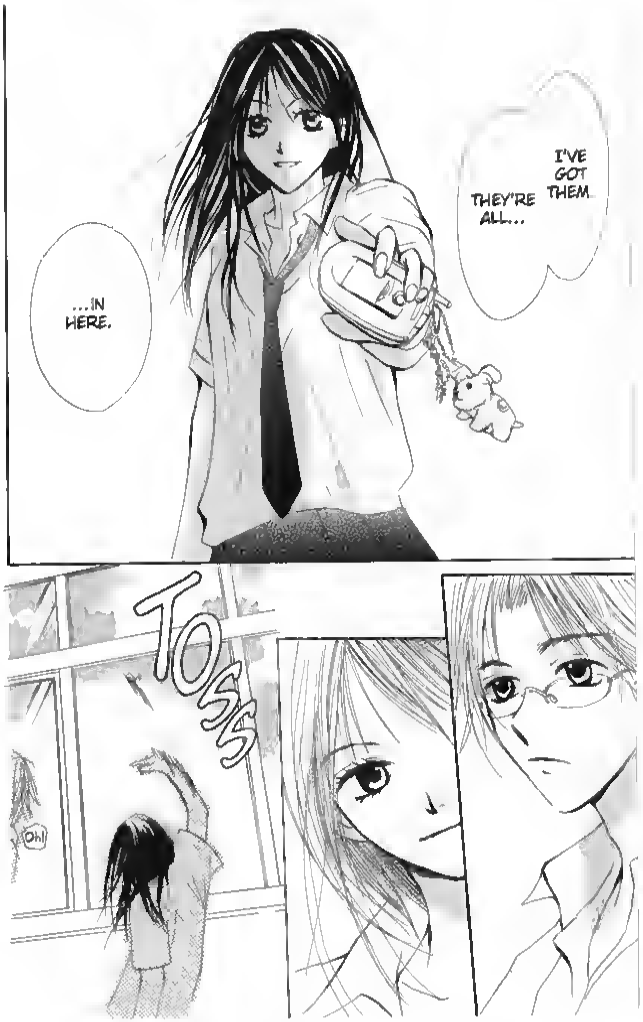
BESIDES...
...ON SIMPLE "INFATUATION."
...I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE TIME...
SCARED YET?

HAYAMI IS JUST OVERPROTECTIVE WHEN IT COMES TO ME.
MY APOLOGIES, TODA-SAN
HAYAMI.
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS MAKING TROUBLE?
OW! OW!
JUST IGNORE HER LITTLE OUT-BURSTS ♡
I REALLY SHOULD TEACH HER SOME MANNERS
THAT HURTS!
SQUEEZE

WELL, I LOVE HER, TOO.
WHY DO YOU THINK...
...YOU'LL BE HAPPY WITH ME, THEN?
I'm so jealous!
I just wanna pound him!
I can't stand it, either!
TODAY ALONE, TEN GUYS TOLD ME THEY WERE JEALOUS OF YOU.
AND I'M SURE THERE ARE PLENTY MORE.
JINGLE

I'VE MADE A LOT OF ENEMIES.
I'M SURE THE OTHER GIRLS HAVE A LOT TO SAY ABOUT ME
I DON'T NEED HER, THOUGH. SHE'LL JUST GET HURT, TOO.
AND EVERY TIME THAT'S HAPPENED, HAYAMI'S BEEN THERE FOR ME.
THEN WHY ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT HER?
BECAUSE SHE'S IN LOVE WITH ME.
Aren't they just friends?

DON'T WORRY.
I WON'T MAKE IT TOO HARD.
SPLASH
I DON'T NEED THEM ANY-MORE.
WHAT A WASTE...
NOW THAT I DON'T HAVE A PHONE, IF YOU WANT TO SEE ME...
...YOU'LL HAVE TO COME AND FIND ME.


I'VE GOT THEM.
THEY'RE ALL...
...IN HERE.
TOSS
OH!

.....
AW, MAN...
DRIPP
cell-phone

...
Just let me get in.
SPLASH
OH!
BLUB
SLPASH
Phew!

...PRETTY HARSH OF HER
THAT WAS..
YOU'RE JUST A GUY.
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
SO IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR..
...THEN FORGET IT.
..ERICA'S NOT A SLUT.
DESPITE WHAT EVERY-ONE SAYS.
.....
WHY ELSE WOULD YOU GO OUT WITH HER?
YOU DON'T EVEN LIKE HER, RIGHT?
Where did that come from?
I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHT OF THAT.

I BOUGHT HER THAT PHONE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ACTUALLY FOUND IT.
NOTHING. I JUST SAW YOU JUMP IN.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
AND SHE WANTED ME TO PICK IT OUT.
SHE KEPT SAYING THAT SHE WANTED A NEW ONE.
SO I BOUGHT IT FOR HER.
SQUEEZE
SQUEEZE
...SHE FILLED THE ADDRESS BOOK WITH A BUNCH OF GUYS' NUMBERS.
AND THE DAY I BOUGHT IT...

I'M JUST PRAYING THAT...
...SHE GETS BORED AND DUMPS YOU.
GOOD LUCK, KID.
SHE DIDN'T EXACTLY HOLD ANYTHING IN, DID SHE?
.....

I'M NOT SURE. I'VE NEVER HAD A GIRLFRIEND BEFORE.
WHAT?
YOU'RE SEVENTEEN AND YOU'VE NEVER--
ACTUALLY, I'M STILL SIXTEEN
BUT YOU'VE NEVER HAD A GIRL-FRIEND?
NOT ONCE.
SIGH..
LOOKS LIKE ERICA'S COLLECTION OF PETS HAS INCREASED BY ONE.
PETS?
Natsu Hayami
Dinner time!
WOOF WOOF
HERE, YOU CAN GIVE HER BACK HER PHONE. I'M SURE SHE'LL APPRECIATE IT.
HUH?
BUT I THOUGHT YOU HATED ME.

...I KNOW I HAVE TO TELL HER.
KAJITSU-CHAAAAN!
I HAVE TO TELL KAJITSU.
MANO-CHAN? WHAT'S UP?
WAVE
WAVE
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE STILL HERE!

AN UNREQUITED LOVE.
HUH? HAYAMI BOUGHT ME THIS? I DON'T REMEMBER THAT.
GUESS THAT'S LOVE.
ACHO.
I'VE BEEN...
...PUTTING IT OFF, BUT...

ERICA...
Beans

NO WAY!
IS IT TRUE THAT NATSU'S GOT A GIRLFRIEND?
I HAVEN'T HEARD..
...ANY-THING LIKE THAT..
BUT I JUST SAW HIM HOLDING HANDS WITH A GIRL!
AND NOT JUST ANY GIRL -- ERICA!

...WOULD I BE OKAY...
...BEING ALONE AGAIN?
I FEEL SICK...
SLAM
DAMN, I DRANK TOO MUCH
Oof!
SLAM
Jingle
Jingle

I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT IT...
BECAUSE YOU'RE, .
...SO IMPORTANT TO ME.
THAT CAN'T BE TRUE...
IT CAN'T.. BUT WHAT IF IT IS?
...IF HE WAS DATING SOME-ONE...
THAT'S A BIG DEAL! NATSU WOULD TELL ME...
IF IT IS TRUE ..
OH...
SPLAT
IF NATSU REALLY DID FIND SOMEONE ELSE...

I'LL COME AGAIN...
...SENSEI.

Recovery is the most important stage. Get plenty of nutrition
Toda
CLACK.
WHAT ARE YOU, MY MOTHER?
FLOP
ROLL

YOU'RE THE ONE BEING DIFFERENT, ERICA! THIS ISN'T LIKE YOU AT ALL!
WHY DON'T YOU EVER STOP?
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE HIM?
DO YOU REALLY EVEN LIKE HIM THAT MUCH? I HATE THIS!
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO GET THIS MAD.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, HAYAMI? DO YOU REALLY HATE TODA-KUN THAT MUCH?
YOU CAN HIT ME IF IT'D MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER
I'M NOT UPSET.
YOU KNOW I'D NEVER DO THAT!
NO WAY.
BUG TODA FOR ONE.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET A NEW PHONE?
TODA-KUN COULDN'T AFFORD SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
WHY...

MUNCH
THIS IS THE PHONE.
...YOU PICKED OUT FOR ME, RIGHT HAYAMI?
SORRY.
ARE YOU UPSET?

SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE
UH, KAJITSU?
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
GOTTA CLEAN UP AND THEN HIT THE BOOKS!
MOVE IT, MOVE IT!
OKAY THEN, I'M GONNA TAKE A BATH!
YUP!
SATSUKI, HAVE YOU DONE YOUR HOMEWORK YET?
...TALK TO YOU FOR A SEC?
CAN I...

.....

IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KNOWS ME BEST.
ONLY YOU, HAYAMI ..
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE, HAYAMI.
YOU ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.

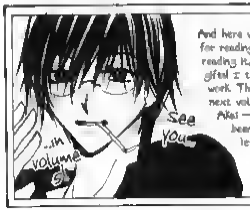
TODA
?
HM?
THERE'S SOMETHING IN MY SHOE.
?
?
A KEY?
WHY WAS THERE A KEY IN MY SHOE?
AND WHOSE IS IT ANYWAY?

MAYBE AFTER EXAMS.
I GUESS ER.. YOU'RE BUSY, SO IT CAN WAIT.
SURE, OKAY. WHATEVER.
NATSU?
DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
I'M SORRY, NATSU.
BUT I'M SCARED.
I'M SO SCARED.
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT IF IT MEANS YOU'LL GO AWAY

#21 Key
SENSEI?
BUT WHAT THE HECK IS IT DOING HERE?
IT LOOKS LIKE A HOUSE KEY.
LOOK
LOOK

crossroad Chapter 21: Key

AND I EVENTUALLY CAUGHT WIND OF IT.
IN JUST ONE DAY, THERE WERE RUMORS EVERY-WHERE
She's a total slut!
No way! You mean that Erica?
I HEARD SHE THREATENED TO KILL HERSELF IF HE DIDN'T GO OUT WITH HER.
IS IT REALLY TRUE THAT ERICA'S PREG-NANT?
THAT'S SO SCARY!
Toda-Kun from Class 1 is going out with Erica!
Pretending to be asleep
I CAN'T TAKE THIS...
I GUESS THIS WAS WHAT HE WANTED TO TALK ABOUT.



And here we begin the last chapter of the book. Thank you so much for reading through volume 4! (For those of you who haven't finished reading it, please do!) Also, thanks for all the wonderful letters and gifts! I tend to re-read them when I feel like I'm being crushed by work. They revive me! Just reading the words, "Can't wait for the next volume!" drives me on! I always hold onto any love-calls for Aki! — It makes me happy that you all think he's so cool. I've never been good at drawing guys, and because I'm still learning, your letters save me. The last chapter is chock-full of cigarette-puffing scenes of Aki, just as requested. And being that he's not the type to smile much, I forced him to smile for this picture! Ha ha ha!

OH MY GOD, TODA!
ARE YOU REALLY GOING OUT WITH ERICA-
EVEN THOUGH ALL HE DOES AT HOME IS PLAY VIDEO GAMES!
YOU'RE RIGHT! NATSU'S TOO BUSY WITH SCHOOL FOR A GIRLFRIEND ANYWAY!
On the Road to Tokyo

LET'S GO
RIGHT!
Sorry, sorry!
WHAT GIVES?
NOT ANOTHER WORD!
AAAAGH!
ACK!
RUM
BLE

I'VE TRIED TO THINK ABOUT IT LOGICALLY...
.....
Deeply interested
ARE ANY OF THEM TRUE?
THEY'RE SPREADING LIKE THE PLAGUE.
THESE RUMORS SURE ARE GETTING CRAZY.
...JUDGING BY NATSU'S PERSONALITY, HE'S NEVER ASKED A GIRL OUT BEFORE.
I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE DETAILS, BUT...
HE MUST'VE BEEN FORCED INTO IT...
AND BEFORE HE KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, THE RUMORS WERE EVERYWHERE.
NEVERMIND THAT I WAS ALL WORRIED ABOUT IT YESTERDAY...
WE'RE SIBLINGS, REMEMBER? ♡
I KNEW IT!
HA HA HA ♡

NATSU-KUUUUN!
strut strut strut
HUH? W-WAIT A MINUTE!
NOW EVERYONE PARTNER UP!
YAY!
I'm so alone.
SOS
NOW I'LL HAVE TO...
...DO THE EXPERIMENT ALL BY MYSELF.
IF I'D KNOWN THIS WAS GONNA GET COMPLETELY BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION, I WOULDN'T HAVE SAID YES IN THE FIRST PLACE!
I WONDER IF IT'S TOO LATE TO GET OUT OF IT.

NATSU-KUN! HURRY UP, WE'VE GOT LAB NEXT!
OH!
I'M GOING HOME!
EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THE EXPERIMENT BEFORE THE EXAM.
BOY, THESE LAB COATS SURE ARE HEAVY.
SNAP
WHAT DO THEY CARE WHO I'M DATING?
IRRITATED
IRRITATED
THESE PEOPLE WON'T LEAVE ME ALONE! I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF THIS!

I KNOW I SHOULD'VE TALKED IT OVER WITH YOU FIRST BEFORE AGREEING.
SORRY
YEAH...
SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
WHY WOULD YOU?
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANTED TO GO OUT WITH HER!
...YOU GET THE WATER-MELON?
WHERE DID..

I KNOW WHAT YOU WANTED TO SAY BEFORE.
IT WAS ABOUT YOU AND ERICA GOING OUT.
ER, YEAH
THAT'S IT
IT'S YOUR PROBLEM, NATSU
YOU DIDN'T THINK IT WAS A BIG DEAL, BUT IT IS.
AND NOW YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
IS THAT IT?
.....

I CAN SEE, YOU KNOW.
THAT'S NOT THAT I WAS REFERRING TO!
I KNOW, YOU CAN SEE WHAT A COOL SISTER I AM!♡
SLAM
OFF
HA HA
ERK!
OOOH, DO I EXCITE YOU? DO I TURN YOU ON?
YEAH, WELL, NEITHER DID I.
JEEZ, NO NEED TO GET SO ANGRY. I DIDN'T MEAN IT

WELL..
...YOU ALWAYS DID LIKE WATER-MELONS, KAJITSU.
YEAH...
PRETTY AWESOME, HUH? IT LOOKS SO GOOD. ♡
THE MAN AT THE SUPER-MARKET GAVE ME A DISCOUNT!
SHE'S BECOMING MORE LIKE RUMIKO-SAN EVERY DAY.
I'm HOTTIE!
HO HO HO
I GOT IT CHEAP BECAUSE YOUR BIG SIS HAPPENS TO BE A TOTAL CUTIE!♡
I CAN FLIRT TOO, YOU KNOW!♡
I LOVE 'EM.

OH, PHEW! I CAN'T STAND SPIDERS.
O-OH! MOM, HOME ALREADY?
SNOOP
SEE, NATSU SAID THERE WAS A SPIDER AND--
OH MY, WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE? ♡
STARE
GASP
JERK
HO HO HO

THAT'S... YOUR FAULT, TOO.
LET'S .. GO OUT.
THAT'S YOUR FAULT, NOT MINE.
YOU'RE SO WEIRD, NATSU. I'VE WORN THIS SHIRT A MILLION TIMES
HMPH
OH.
OH MY GOD! ARE YOU SERIOUS!?
WHERE!? WHERE!?
THERE'S A SPIDER ON YOUR BACK.
REAWW!?
YEAH
IT'S GONE
AHHHGH!
GET IT OFF!
GET IT OFF!

I DON'T THINK HE'D EVER FORGIVE YOU.
...NO DOUBT TARO WILL CUT NA-CHAN OUT OF THE PICTURE IN NO TIME!
BUT TARO DOESN'T AGREE WITH ME
IF YOU TRY SOMETHING, KAJITSU...
CLIP
CLIP
Oh, it's giving me goose-bumps just imagining it!
PLEASE, MOM! STOP BEING RIDICU-LOUS!
COME ON, NATSU! SAY SOMETHING!

FAMILY OR NOT...
...BENEATH THE LABLES AND CLOTH-ING, WE'RE ALL JUST MEN AND WOMEN!
HO HO HO
V!
HH...
I can't believe she just said that.
...I'M TOTALLY FINE WITH IT!
WELL, AS FAR AS MAMA GOES...
I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR WORRYING ME. ♡
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING AWFULLY COY LATELY, KAJITSU ♡♡
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MOM?
I GOTTA SAY, YOU AND NA-CHAN LOOK LIKE A FINE COUPLE
YOU'VE GOT A CRUSH ON SOMEONE, DON'T YOU?
W-WE'RE FAMILY!

I MEAN, I CAN'T EVEN FOCUS ON STUDYING NOW! IT'S NO USE!
WHAT?
WHAT?
THAT WAS WAY TOO DEEP!

WHAT DOES HE MEAN?

SORRY I'M MAKING SO MUCH NOISE.
OH, SATSUKI, YOU WERE STUDYING?
SCRTCH
SCRTCH
SCRTCH

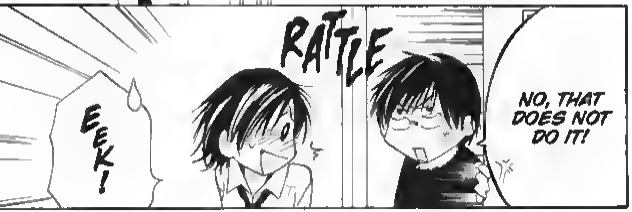
I DON'T MIND
WOW
IT'S OKAY
HUH?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'D NEVER DO ANYTHING TO DESTROY OUR FAMILY.
TARO WOULD PROBABLY DO THAT.
HE'D NEVER FORGIVE ME-- OR YOU.

I WOULD...
...NEVER.

...INVOLVED IN THAT ANYMORE.
BUT I'M NOT...
HUH? WHY ME?
COULD YOU DROP THIS BY SENSEI'S OFFICE, TODA-SAN?
EVERY-ONE'S FILLED IT OUT.
YOU WERE PART OF HIS CALLIGRAPHY CLUB, RIGHT?

THIS SHOULD DO IT...
Off I go!
SHUCK
Calligraphy Classroom


EEK!
RATTLE
NO, THAT DOES NOT DO IT!

Sounds like a manga-ka (ha ha)
NOOO..
OOH..
AAAH..
..I CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON THIS AT ALL!
COM-PARED TO HER..
THIS LITTLE KID'S IMPRES-SIVE!
I can't wait to see what her future holds!
SCRTCH SCRTCH SCRTCH
AND THIS KEY...
MAX
CONCENTRATION POWER

CALLIGRAPHY CLUB SELF-STUDY SESSION
I HAVEN'T ASKED SENSEI IF IT'S HIS OR NOT.
I'LL BE PASSING AROUND THE ATTENDANCE SHEET, SO..
...PUT A CIRCLE AROUND YOUR OWN NAME.
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.
DOESN'T REALLY HAVE HIS HEART IN IT LATELY?
Though I can't complain about the self-study time.
YOU KNOW, DOESN'T IT FEEL LIKE AKAI-SENSEI...
SLAM
YOU MAY GO NOW.
GOOD LUCK ON STUDYING FOR YOUR EXAMS.

UH, SEN-SEI?
IN MY SHOE YESTERDAY, I FOUND...
...A KEY-
AKAI-SENSEI! ONCE OUR EXAMS ARE OVER, LET'S GO KARAOKING! ♡♡
GLOMP
SQUEAL
♡♡

HE SEEMS TO BE IN A WORSE MOOD THAN USUAL.
?
?
STERN

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, SENSEI.
I'M GLAD..
HMPH

WHAT'S WITH THE SILENT TREATMENT!? IS THIS SOME SORT OF TORTURE OR SOMETHING? NOT LIKE I CAN JUST ASK..
STERN
SILENCE

UH-OH...

UGH, IT'S HOT!
THIS YEAR, WE'RE GETTING OURSELVES AN AIR-CONDITIONER!
THAT'S IT! I'VE MADE UP MY MIND!
.....
WH-WHY ARE YOU ASKING THAT ALL OF A SUDDEN?
DO YOU HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND?
TARO?

POOR SENSEI...
OOH, BUT IT STILL BURNS ME UP!
THE SAME REACTION AS USUAL.
TOSS
COME ON, SENSEI! IT'LL BE FUN!
La la la!
pant huff
huff pant
EEK!
SLAM

MAYBE IT'S ACTUALLY...
I STILL COULDN'T ASK HIM.
BUT THEN WHOSE IS IT?
. NOT SENSEI'S.

IS THAT SO?
WHO THE HELL CARES WHAT I THINK?
IF YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A GIRL, THEN GOOD FOR YOU!
IN NO TIME AT ALL, YOU'LL START THINKING ABOUT A LITTLE BIT 'O THIS, AND A LITTLE BIT 'O THAT!
PAT PAT
ALL RIGHT..
SO YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A GIRLFRIEND, HUH?
SIGH...
I GOTTA SAY, I'M RELIEVED.

NAH. I'D ONLY HATE IT IF YOU WERE ALL REALLY ANNOYING.
DON'T YOU GET TIRED OF IT?
EVER SINCE WE ALL MOVED IN TOGETHER, YOU'VE DONE NOTHING BUT WORRY ABOUT THE FAMILY
HEY..
TARO...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I MIGHT GO OUT WITH A GIRL FROM MY CLASS.

I ALMOST CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE SIBLINGS!
LEMME JUST SAY THAT FOR A WHILE THERE, I WAS AFRAID THE HOUSE WAS GOING TO FALL APART.
GA HA HA HA
AS LONG AS IT'S ANYONE BESIDES KAJITSU...
...I'M WITH YOU 100%!

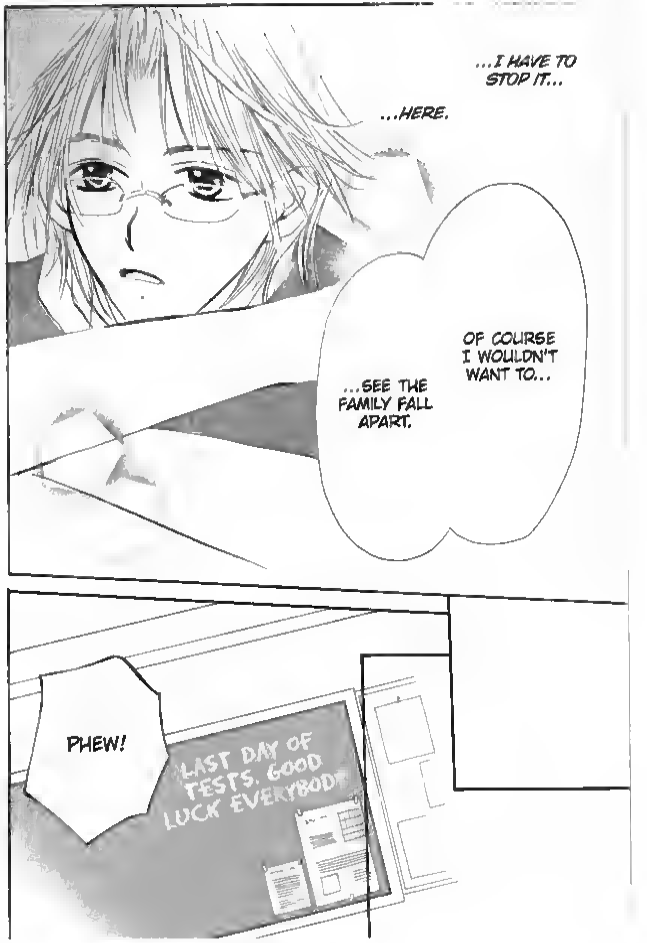
ANY FURTHER AND...

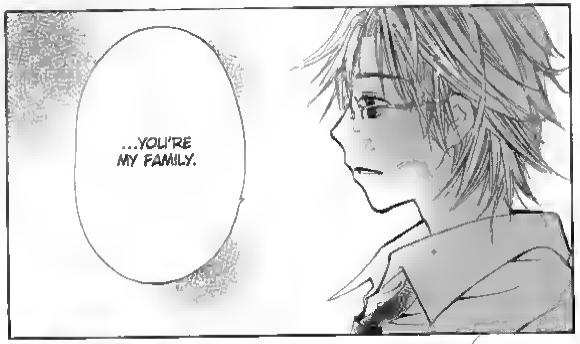
...IT'LL REACH THE POINT OF NO RETURN.

THAT'S WHY...

TO BE HONEST, YOU AND KAJITSU WERE THE BIGGEST OF MY WORRIES.
I KNOW YOU TWO WERE CLOSE TO BEGIN WITH, BEING THE SAME AGE AND ALL.
...IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN HARD..
...TO START... YOU KNOW.
HANGING OUT TOGETHER ALL DAY..
...IT LOOKS LIKE I WAS WRONG!
BUT...
YOU'RE NOT AS WEAK AS I THOUGHT!
AND I KNOW YOU'D NEVER WANT TO HURT BIG BROTHER, RIGHT?

Let's walk home together
Natsu
SO...
...HOW WERE YOUR EXAMS?
LOOK, EXAMS ARE OVER, SO LET'S JUST FORGET ABOUT THEM FOR NOW.
IT'S NO GOOD! I GOT THE RED PEN FOR SURE! I DON'T WANT TO TAKE SUMMER CLASSES!
Jingle Jingle Ring Ring
MMM, PRETTY BAD, ACTUALLY!
HOW ABOUT YOU?
WAIT, LIKE I EVEN NEED TO ASK.
ACTUALLY, NOW THAT TESTS ARE OVER, I THOUGHT I SHOULD TELL YOU.
OH, WHAT YOU WANTED TO SAY BEFORE?


...I HAVE TO STOP IT...
...HERE.
OF COURSE I WOULDN'T WANT TO...
...SEE THE FAMILY FALL APART.
PHEW!
LAST DAY OF TESTS. GOOD LUCK EVERYBODY!


...YOU'RE MY FAMILY.

WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?
I'M SORRY.
I'M SORRY...
AND I CAN'T THINK OF YOU AS ANYTHING MORE.

I LIKE YOU A LOT.
I STILL LIKE YOU, KAJITSU.
BUT...

I'M...
...DEFINITELY GOING OUT WITH ERICA.

I DON'T LIKE THIS!
I DON'T LIKE YOU GOING OUT WITH SOMEONE ELSE!

YOU TOLD ME ONCE..
..THAT I WAS PRECIOUS AND YOU LOVED ME, NATSU.
YOU'RE MY BELOVED LITTLE BROTHER. SO WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?
I FEEL THE SAME WAY, NATSU.
IF WE'RE FAMILY, THEN WE CAN ALWAYS BE TOGETHER! WE CAN STILL CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER. I'M PERFECTLY FINE WITH THAT.
YEAH, I SAID THAT.
KAJITSU...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT, NATSU.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WANT TO BE YOUR LOVER OR ANYTHING!
I DON'T NEED ANYTHING MORE!

HOW COULD YOU LIE TO ME, NATSU?
I DON'T WANT YOU TO!
NO!
YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T GO.
YOU LIED!
WHY!?

.....
IT'S ALREADY DECIDED.
NO...
NATSU...
DON'T YOU LEAVE, NATSU! HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?
I DON'T WANT THIS!
NATSU!

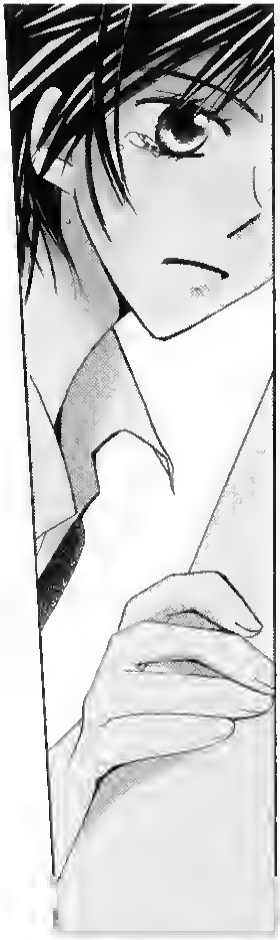
Akai
CLICK
OPEN
RATTLE RATTLE
CRACK
TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE...

I HAVE TO GET OUT...
...FROM THIS TINY, NARROW BOX.
I CAN'T...
I WANT TO GET OUT...
...FROM THIS REALITY.
...TAKE THIS ANYMORE!

Anything we could tell you
about the next volume of

crossroad

would be a spoiler.
Therefore, we'll say nothing at all...



...AND I WILL NEVER...

...COME BACK AGAIN.

WHAT!? WHAT DO YOU MEAN "OF COURSE"? HOW FULL OF YOURSELF CAN YOU GET?
SO OF COURSE YOU PLAN ON INTERVIEWING ME ABOUT IT, DON'T YOU?
I'M YOUR HOST, NATSU (AGE 16) WITH THE AMAZINGLY SHINY, NATURALLY WAVY AND GRAVITY-DEFYING HAIR.
OKAY, WE'VE ONLY GOT A FEW EXTRA PAGES THIS TIME, SO I'LL BE YOUR SPOKESPERSON.
SO WHAT I THINK IS-
ER...
AND I'M HERE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE UPCOMING VOLUME 5
This is so humiliating
2/43
NO, KAJITSU! WAIT!
YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO THE REST FIRST!
I'D JUST LOVE TO SEE THAT HAPPEN. ♡
TODA-KUN, AFTER BEING STRICKEN BY WELL-TIMED INSULTS, CRUMBLES INTO A DECREPIT EXCUSE FOR A HUMAN BEING
I CAN SEE IT NOW TODA-KUN, WISHING SO DESPERATELY TO BECOME ANOTHER ONE OF MY ADMIRERS, KNEELS AND BOWS BEFORE ME. TODA-KUN, CHEWING ON HIS OWN GLASSES AS HE ENDURES THE PAIN...
Scary
Loud Off
hiss
What!?
IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!
WAIT A SECOND. WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO--

Mail your fan art to us and you might see it printed in a volume of Crossroad! All artwork submitted will not be returned, so if it's important to you make sure you send a copy. If you're under 18 you must include your parent's written permission for us to publish your art. Send art to:

Go! Media Entertainment
5737 Kanan Rd. #591
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

crossroad 4 / end

Shioko Mizuki

See, this was all the space I had left for bonus material, so I came up with this silly little manga. Heh heh.

Now, here's my list of special thanks. Kise-san, Ari-chan, Osashi, Tennen-san, Mizushima-san, Aya-chan, and my editor. Thank you all!

Until next time! Thank you so very much!

♡

I'll be so happy if you all read volume 5 too!

Shioko Mizuki

Translator's Notes

Pg. 23 -- The Apocolypse of Devilman

A recent production of the classic Japanese manga hero, Devilman. It aired in 2000 and covers the beginning of the final story arc in Devilman - Armageddon, the final battle between good and evil.

Pg. 67 -- "Scent" in katakana

Katakana is a writing system in Japanese that is visually more stick-like and ungraceful than the other alphabet, hiragana. It's used when spelling foreign terms but also carries a nuance of strangeness or negativity even when used with native Japanese terms. Hence, the mangaka's choice to not spelling "scent" in katakana as it could transform the nuance of the word to "smell" or even "stink." (**匂い** vs. **ニオイ**)

Pg. 85 -- SMAP

A popular boy band in Japan which dominated the Japanese pop culture landscape throughout the 90's. Along with producing hit singles, they have made appearances on T.V. ranging from sitcoms to commercials, as mentioned here. Katori-san himself has also done voice acting in anime and hosted a couple of his own shows -- including the infamous "Shingo Mama."

Pg. 114 -- Charm envelope

Very elaborate brocade bags reminiscent of a teabag with a thin white cord knotted to it meant to hold Shinto charms within. Natsu's mother's decision to use it to give back his money and last message is a sign of blessing.

Pg. 122 -- *Eiji Happo*

The eight rules of calligraphy. Literally, it is the "principle of 8 strokes of a brush from the Chinese character 'ei' (etemity)." Since it includes all eight directions of a brush, and the number eight is a favorable symbol in Chinese mythology, the very practice is thought to indicate innumerable and unending strokes and therefore creations.

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